

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents

4.1 The role of the key person and settling-in at Ashridge Nursery

Policy statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, our staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. We aim to make our setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting. This induction will occur at the start of term prior to the Nursery re-opening for existing children, allowing younger children the space to explore their new environment.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
 - Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
 - Acting as the key contact for the parents.
 - Developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
 - Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.

- Encouraging positive relationships between children in her/his key group when possible, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information on our website, information days and individual meetings with parents.
- All parents are encouraged to visit the setting with their child prior to registering with the Nursery.
- New starters and parents are invited to attend an induction session to meet their child's key person and other members of staff prior to the start of term. During this session the child's registration records are explained and completed with his/her parents.
- On a child's first day they will arrive 15 minutes later than the normal session time so that where possible they can be greeted individually by their key person.
- We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We encourage parents to, where appropriate, separate from their child for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- To avoid upset at parental/child separation, the Lead Practitioner will telephone the parent if appropriate asking the parent to return, stay with the child for 15 minutes, take the child home and return at the next session.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example, the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left.

On _____ (date)
Date to be reviewed _____ (date)
Signed on behalf of the provider _____
Name of signatory _____
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Play is What I Do (2010)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With supporting documentation (2012)